



The President's Daily Brief

~~Top Secret~~ 13 November 1968



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THE PRESIDENT'S
DAILY BRIEF
13 NOVEMBER 1968

1. South Vietnam

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2. South Vietnam

Denying that Thieu had reneged on any understandings at the last moment, South Vietnam's information minister commented on Secretary Clifford's statement saying the US and Hanoi could go ahead and negotiate without Saigon, "but their conclusions certainly will be of no validity at all."

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3. Soviet Union

The Soviets want to get a dialogue going with the US again. This came through clearly in Kosygin's surprise meeting with McNamara on Monday.

Stating that military budgets had reached impossible levels, Kosygin came down strongly in favor of bilateral talks on strategic arms limitation. As the Soviet premier put it, disarmament is an "imperative necessity" despite fundamental differences between the US and the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union, said Kosygin, will cooperate in seeking further disarmament measures, in trying to get adherence to the nonproliferation treaty, and in a "general lessening of tension."

Kosygin raised the Vietnam issue, but dropped it when McNamara said he was no longer qualified to comment. In an allusion to the Soviets' chronic truck shortage, the premier also asked about the purchase of US truck production technology, saying the Soviets have a high regard for American expertise.

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4. West Germany

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5. West Berlin

The East Germans may be preparing some new move to harass West German civilians traveling to Berlin. Yesterday Kiesinger told Lodge he had information that the East Germans would soon start requiring visas for West German travelers and perhaps insist on consular offices in West Germany and West Berlin. The East Germans had implicitly threatened access to West Berlin if the Christian Democrats held their convention in the city. Nothing happened during the convention, but Kiesinger is apprehensive they may make good on their threat now.

6. Argentina

Argentina will buy ☐ French Mirage III supersonic fighters for delivery in 1970. Last year Peru bought a less advanced version of the Mirage. With both Argentina and Peru improving their air forces, Chile has shown new interest in upgrading its own.

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The Argentines also have bought French tanks. The military says they would prefer American equipment, but claim US arms sale restrictions force them to buy in Europe.

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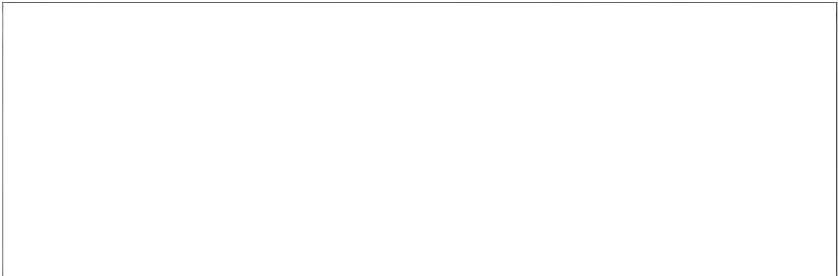


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7. Communist China

Communications, weather reporting, and transport flights all fit a pattern suggesting the Chinese are about to run another test of their medium-range ballistic missile. Since August there has been little or no testing of this missile which has been in development for at least five years. We have detected no operational deployment as yet.

8. Venezuela

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FOR THE PRESIDENT'S EYES ONLY

- 1.) Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
- 2.) North Vietnamese Reflections of U S
Political Attitudes



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Special Daily Report on North Vietnam
for the President's Eyes Only

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I. NOTES ON THE SITUATION

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Soviet Commercial Shipments to Haiphong: Moscow Radio is telling its domestic listeners about the large quantities of Soviet industrial equipment and foodstuffs being shipped to North Vietnam. A 10 November broadcast said there are ten ships from the Black Sea merchant fleet either unloading in Haiphong or on the way there.

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For its part, the Hanoi government is said to be worried about the size of its growing debt to the Soviet Union.

the Vietnamese hypersensitive about balancing their trade with other countries because of the mounting trade deficit incurred for Soviet commercial shipments.

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Council of Ministers Meeting: North Vietnam's Council of Ministers recently was convened to consider the current war situation and near-term economic policies, according to an announcement on Radio Hanoi's international service on 12 November. The brief account of the council's communiqué suggests the meeting was routine.

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II. NORTH VIETNAMESE REFLECTIONS OF US POLITICAL ATTITUDES ON THE WAR

Liberation Radio on Nixon Administration: Liberation Radio ridiculed what it called the Saigon government's expectations of a better deal from President-elect Nixon than it had gotten from President Johnson. The Front radio said Mr. Nixon's war policies were the same as the President's and would doom the US and Saigon to defeat. A second broadcast, examining prospects for the new US administration in its approach to the Vietnam war, forecast failure because the US has been exhausted by the war and by domestic problems. The commentator said Mr. Nixon could not continue President Johnson's policies because they have proven inadequate; the alternative, he implied, is for the US to withdraw from Vietnam.

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